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ABSTRACT

In 1975 a nationwide sample of admissions offices of 110 large, primarily white universities were surveyed on their admission of black freshmen and on their admission criteria. Particular emphasis was placed on further effects of budget cuts and on admission criteria for nonblack minorities. Responses from 107 schools, showed that the national median percent of black freshmen remained at five percent, as it was in 1974, compared to six percent in 1973, five percent in 1972, four percent in 1971 and 1970, and three percent in 1969. The southern region was the only region that increased (six percent in 1975, five percent in 1974). Nonblack minority enrollments of freshmen are presented, and western schools were revealed to have the highest percentages of nonblack minorities (six percent Asian Americans, and five percent Spanish-speaking Americans). While 24 percent of the schools reported some impact of tighter budgets in minority admissions programs in 1975, there was a rate of 40 percent in 1974. The number of schools employing open admissions has increased, as has the mean number of admissions criteria employed by the schools. The number of special programs is down, as is the number of schools employing different criteria for minority students. The arguments for considering race and sex-related variables in admissions are presented, and noncognitive variables useful in selecting cultural and racial minority students are suggested. (Author/SW)

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MINORITY ADMISSIONS TO LARGE UNIVERSITIES: A SEVEN YEAR NATIONAL SURVEY

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This study was sponsored and partially funded by Commission IX (Assessment for Student Development) of the American College Personnel Association.

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Summary

For the seventh consecutive year, admissions offices of 110 large, primarily white universities, representing all states and the District of Columbia, were surveyed on their admission of new black freshmen and the criteria used to admit those students. Particular emphasis was placed on further effects of budget cuts, and on admission criteria for non-black minorities in the 1975 survey. Responses from 107 schools (97%) showed that the national median percent of new black freshmen remained at 5%, as it was in 1974, compared to 6% in 1973, 5% in 1972, 4% in 1971 and 1970, and 3% in 1969. The Southern region was the only region that increased (6% in 1975, 5% in 1974) and is now second only to the Middle States region in new black freshman enrollment. Non-black minority enrollments of new freshmen were: Spanish speaking Americans, 1.3%; "other" minorities, 1.3%; Asian Americans, 0.8%; and American Indians, 0.3%. Western schools had the highest percentages of non-black minorities (6% Asian Americans; 5% Spanish speaking Americans). While 24% of the schools reported some impact of tighter budgets in minority admissions programs in 1975, this compares to 40% in 1974.

Several statistics from the present study have moved closer to 1973 levels. For instance, the number of schools employing open admissions has increased, as has the mean number of admissions criteria employed by the schools.

However, there are a number of counter trends to suggest the strong possibility that we may have reached a plateau, or could have a decrease in future years. The number of special programs is down, as is the number of schools employing different criteria for minority students. The use of recommendations has not changed, and there is virtually no indication that any schools are using non-cognitive admissions criteria in admitting minority students

The arguments for considering race and sex-related variables in admissions are presented along with suggested non-cognitive variables useful in selecting cultural and racial minority students.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's there appeared to be an increased interest and concern with the education of black students. Conference themes, journal articles, and new projects concerning blacks abounded. The popular media were filled with stories of programs and services for black and other minority students. However, as we moved to the middle 1970's with declining enrollments and tight budgets, the interest waned; and many educators, as well as the general public, felt that we had done enough, if not too much, for black students.

Here would seem to be a situation requiring some facts. What happened during the late 1960's and early 1970's in black student education? Were there changes? If so, what were the changes? Did we convince ourselves that effort was equal to accomplishment? The purpose of the present study was to answer these and related questions for black and other minority students at large, predominantly white universities in the area of admissions. Three major aspects of admissions were considered: the number of new black freshmen entering, the types of admissions criteria employed for blacks, and the nature of special programs for black and other minority students. Additional questions of interest were posed during particular years.

A series of studies conducted under the sponsorship of Commission IX (Assessment for Student Development) of the American College Personnel Association was begun during the 1969-70 school year. Previous studies in the series (Sedlacek & Brooks, 1970; Sedlacek, Brooks, & Horowitz, 1972; Sedlacek, Brooks, & Mindus, 1973; Sedlacek, Lewis, & Brooks, 1974; Sedlacek, Merritt, & Brooks, 1975; Sedlacek & Pelham, 1976) have shown a number of trends. New black freshman enrollment rose slowly but steadily from 3% in 1969 to 6% in 1973, but then dropped to 5% in 1974. The Middle States and Western area schools made the greatest gains from 1969 to 1973 (Middle States 6% to 13%; Western 5% to 9%) but also made the largest drops in

1974 (Middle States to 9%; Western to 4%). Geographical areas are based on regional accrediting associations reported in the higher education directory of the U.S. Office of Education (1975).

Despite considerable evidence as to problems in selecting black students with traditional admissions criteria (e.g., Pfeifer & Sedlacek, 1974; Sedlacek, 1974a; Sedlacek & Brooks, 1976a), most schools continue to employ grades and standardized tests. Also, schools are employing fewer other admissions criteria and they are less apt to have open admissions in recent years.

Special programs for minority students have been increasing in recent years, especially for Native Americans and Spanish speaking Americans. Private schools have tended to enroll a greater percentage of black students over the years. The schools most successful in enrolling blacks have tended to emphasize academic programs (special or general) while the least successful schools have tended to emphasize money in recruiting black students. Additionally, schools that were able to streamline red tape and admit black students on the spot were more successful in enrolling blacks.

Twenty percent of the schools, including 40% of the Western, 36% of the Middle States, and 33% of the New England schools said they were offering less financial aid in 1974. Additionally, 16% of the schools linked tighter budgets to fewer incoming minority students and 14% were reducing minority recruiting activities.

The present study was designed to resurvey the large, predominantly white universities in the United States to continue to monitor the trends and questions noted above. Particular emphasis was placed on further effects of budget cuts and admissions criteria for non-black minorities

Method and Results

The admissions offices of 110 universities were sent a questionnaire concerning their minority admissions policies. The institutions sampled were large, primarily white schools throughout the United States. Schools in the major athletic conferences and large, independent institutions were included in the sample. If an individual state (including the District of Columbia) was not represented by the sampling method used, the largest school in the state was included. The questionnaires were mailed out in November, 1975 and telephone follow-up procedures resulted in a total return of 107 questionnaires (97%). Of the 107 schools reporting, 87 (81%) were public and 20 (19%) were private.

1. *What is your approximate undergraduate enrollment? About how many new freshmen matriculated this fall? About how many of your newly matriculated freshmen are black?*

Table 1 shows the range of enrollment, total enrollment and black enrollment by six geographical regions for schools in the sample. The median total enrollment was 12,999, while median freshman enrollment was 2,700, and median black freshman enrollment was 145. The median percent of black freshmen was 5%. One school had 20% blacks and no schools had no blacks.

Enrollments for 1975 are nearly identical to those of 1974, including the median percent of black freshmen which remained at 5% from 1974 and compares to 6% in 1973, 5% in 1972, 4% in 1971 and 1970, and 3% in 1969.

Table 2 shows that the largest drops in percent of black freshman enrollment occurred in the Middle States and Western regions in 1974 and that the regions remained about the same in 1975. The Southern region has increased steadily from 2% in 1969 to 6% in 1975, and is second only to the Middle States region in new black freshmen enrollment.

2. Briefly describe your regular admissions criteria for new freshmen.

Table 3 shows that high school rank (HSR), high school grade point average (HSGPA) and standardized tests (Scholastic Aptitude Test [SAT] and American College Test [ACT])remain as the most common admissions criteria employed by schools. Recommendations are used by 20 (19%) of the schools and extracurricular activities and interviews are used infrequently. Fourteen (13%) had open admissions, which is defined as requiring only a high school diploma or its equivalent for entry. This compares to 8% in 1974, 16% in 1973 and 1972, 12% in 1971 and 1970, and 10% in 1969.

The mean number of admissions criteria employed by all schools was 2.48 in 1975, 2.29 in 1974, 2.90 in 1973, 2.77 in 1972, 3.17 in 1971, 3.32 in 1970, and 2.05 in 1969. Thus the trend in using fewer admissions criteria since 1970 has halted and may be reversing although the schools using open admissions have increased to near 1973 levels. The use of recommendations remained at 19% and halted the trend toward less use in recent years: 19% in 1974, 28% in 1973, 29% in 1972, 33% in 1971, 34% in 1970, and 13% in 1969.

Additionally, 78 (73%) of the schools reported using either HSGPA or HSR combined with SAT or ACT scores in 1975. This compares to 61% in 1974, 86% in 1973, 82% in 1972, 80% in 1971, 82% in 1970 and 99% in 1969. The 1974 drop appears reversed here also.

3. Do you have special programs in which blacks (or mostly blacks) are enrolled? If yes, please briefly describe the criteria for admissions to the program(s).

Table 4 shows that 59 schools (55%) had special programs in which mostly blacks were enrolled compared to 62% in 1974, 50% in 1973, 54% in 1972, 60% in 1971, 52% in 1970 and 48% in 1969. Nine of the 59 schools (15%) had programs for local residents only, compared to 16% in 1974, 24% in 1973, 28% in 1972, 14% in

1971 and 20% in 1970. Compared to regular admissions criteria, relatively more weight was given to HSGPA, HSR and recommendations and less weight to standardized tests for special programs. While this follows the general pattern of previous years, the use of recommendations among schools with special programs remained low (8%, 5 of 59) in 1975, which was close to the 7% of 1974. This compares to 24% in 1973, 43% in 1972, 23% in 1971, 38% in 1970, and 43% in 1969.

Additionally, the trend toward less emphasis on HSGPA, SAT and ACT in admitting blacks to special programs continued in 1975. HSGPA was used by 4 of 59 schools (7%) in 1975, compared to 9% in 1974, 20% in 1973, 36% in 1972, 26% in 1971, 46% in 1970, and 55% in 1969. SAT was used by 4 of 59 schools (7%) in 1975, compared to 3% in 1974, 13% in 1973, 26% in 1972, 18% in 1971, 39% in 1970 and 57% in 1969. ACT was always used less than SAT but was down to 2 of 59 (3%) in 1975, compared to 4% in 1974, 9% in 1973, 12% in 1972, 9% in 1971, 5% in 1970 and 10% in 1969.

4. Aside from special programs, are blacks admitted under the same criteria as are all regular new freshmen? If no, please briefly describe how the "black" criteria differ from the "regular" criteria.

Ten (9%) of the 107 schools used different regular admissions criteria for blacks in 1975, compared to 13% in 1974, 14% in 1973, 26% in 1972, 20% in 1971, 36% in 1970 and 45% in 1969. "Different criteria of admission" was generally interpreted by admissions officers as referring to different applications or cutoff points of the same variables used in regular admissions. Private schools tended to use different admissions criteria more than public schools in 1975 (20% vs. 7%), compared to similar differentials in past years: 35% vs. 8% in 1974, 17% versus 11% in 1973, 50% versus 20% in 1972, 52% versus 20% in 1971, and 75% vs. 26% in 1970; the higher percentage being private in all cases (see Table 6).

5. *Please provide the approximate number of newly matriculated nonblack minority freshmen. Are the minority groups listed above admitted under the same criteria as are all regular new freshmen?*

Table 5 shows the percentages of non-black minorities by region. The data vary widely by school and by region, and because of the small numbers involved, percentages are rounded to the first decimal place. These data were not collected in previous surveys. Largest percentages occur in the Western region where Asian Americans represent 6 % of the new freshmen and Spanish speaking Americans represent 5%, which compares to 5% black freshmen in the region. The largest group of minorities other than blacks: Spanish speaking Americans, American Indians or Asian American freshmen, was in the Middle States region with 3%.

One-third of the New England schools, 20% of the Middle States schools, 19% of the North Central schools, 17% of the Western schools, 4% of the Southern schools and none of the Northwest schools reported using different criteria for admitting non-black minority students. Nearly all the criteria reported involved different weights or cutoff points for the traditional admissions criteria (grades and test scores).

Table 6 shows the data by type of school (public or private). Private schools had a higher median percent of new black freshmen (7% versus 4%). This differential has been: 1974, 5% versus 4.5%; 1973, private 6%, public 7%; 1972, private 6%, public 5%; 1971 and 1970, private 6%, public 4%. Data were not reported for 1969. The same percentage of public and private schools had special programs in 1975 (55%) compared to: public 65%, private 50% in 1974; public 50%, private 50% in 1973; public 53%, private 55% in 1972; public 58%, private 67% in 1971; and public 54%, private 45% in 1970.

6. *What has been the impact of a tighter budget on your minority admissions programs?*

Twenty-four percent of the schools reported that there had been some impact of tighter budgets on their minority admissions programs in 1975. This compares to to 40% reporting such an impact in 1974. Regionally, 42% of the Northwest schools, 28% of the North Central schools, 22% of the Southern schools, 20% of the Western schools, 19% of the Middle States schools and none of the New England schools reported some impact of tighter budgets. Nearly all schools reported reductions in financial aid to minorities and reduced recruiting activities. Other points mentioned include closer cooperation among campus offices and a reluctance to consider anything but traditional admissions activities and programs.

Discussion

There is no evidence in 1975 of a continuation of a trend in the reduction of minority admissions in the large universities, since the median level of enrollment has not changed since 1974. While the percentage of new black freshman enrollment is still lower than the 6% reported in 1973, there are some indications that the trend may be moving back to the 1973 level. First, the American Council on Education (ACE) reported a very large increase in black freshman enrollment in all universities in 1975. They report 5.4% new black freshmen compared to 3.4% in 1974, 3.0% in 1973, and 3.5% in 1972 (Astin, King, Light & Richardson, 1973, 1974, 1975; ACE, 1972). It should be noted that the ACE figures represent black freshmen in all universities and are based on a weighted sampling procedure rather than the census of nearly the entire population of large universities as is employed in this study. Thus, differences between the ACE data and the present study could be due to many variables, but if there has been a large boom in black admissions, the current study clearly shows it has not been in the large schools. The ACE figures on non-black minorities are close to those in Table 5. The largest discrepancy appears to be that ACE reported 1.7% "Orientals" compared to 0.8% Asian Americans in the present study.

Several statistics from the present study have moved closer to 1973 levels. For instance, the number of schools employing open admisssions has increased, as has the mean number of admissions criteria employed by the schools.

However, there are a number of counter trends to suggest the strong possibility that we may have reached a plateau or could have a decrease in future years. The number of special programs is down, as is the number of schools employing different criteria for minority students. The use of recommendations has not changed and there is virtually no indication that any schools are using non-cognitive admissions criteria in admitting minority students.

There appear to be a growing number of studies which indicate that we cannot use a single equation or selection system for all students (e.g., Baggaley, 1974; Borgen, 1972; Farver, Sedlacek and Brooks, 1975; Goldman, 1973; Horowitz, Sedlacek and Brooks, 1972; Perry, 1972; Pfeifer and Sedlacek, 1970, 1971, 1974; Sedlacek and Brooks, 1976b; Temp, 1971). The support for this position centers around three clusters of results. First, there are studies which show no relationship, or perhaps a negative relationship, between traditional predictors and college grades. Sedlacek and Brooks (1976b) found that the SAT-Verbal scale had correlated significantly with freshman grades (.56) for black females and was uncorrelated for black males (-.03) in a special program at the University of Maryland, while the SAT-Math scale correlated .16 for black females and -.33 for black males. Thus the SAT-Math scale actually had *negative* validity for black males in that sample. Baggaley (1974) found essentially the same results with blacks at the University of Pennsylvania. The SAT-Verbal correlated .19 with grades for black females and -.04 for black males, while the SAT-Math correlated .38 for black females and -.36 for black males.

The second cluster of studies supporting differential race-sex subgroup prediction involves studies which show that if traditional predictors are to be used, there must be separate equations or cutoffs for each subgroup to achieve optimum validity. Horowitz et al. (1972), Perry (1972), Pfeifer and Sedlacek (1971), and Temp (1971) all clearly show this. Goldman (1973) presents evidence that even when a general regression equation *over-predicts* how well minorities will do, it is still unfair to them. He argues that since we have less ability to accurately predict minority student grades (higher standard error of estimate), if we combine race-sex groups and develop a single regression equation we will achieve an equation favoring the more predictable majority applicants. Even if we obtain an over-estimate of minority student grades, it will not be offset by the use of a relatively inaccurate equation. Interestingly, white females tend to be the most predictable race-sex subgroup and any general equation would favor them. That we don't have a great many more white females in higher education is evidence that admissions officers have not been reluctant to balance classes with white males. Black males tend to be the least predictable race-sex subgroup and any general equation would discriminate most against them.

Studies by Farver et al. (1975) and Horowitz et al. (1972) further support the proposition of differential regression equations for race-sex subgroups. They found that if grades beyond the freshman year are predicted, different equations result. Not only are the regression equations different over the years, but blacks become relatively more predictable than whites after the freshman year. Thus, race-sex subgroup equations predicting beyond the freshman year appear particularly appropriate. Studies by Berdie and Prestwood (1975) and Kallingal (1971) further support this conclusion.

The third major cluster of studies supporting the consideration of race-sex subgroups in admissions deals with non-cognitive predictors of minority student

success. A number of studies have shown that background, interest, attitudinal and motivational variables are related to minority student success but are not necessarily useful in predicting the academic success of white students (e.g., DiCesare, Sedlacek & Brooks, 1972; Gurin et al., 1969; Horowitz et al., 1972; Lowman and Spuck, 1975; Perry, 1972; Pfeifer and Sedlacek, 1970, 1974; and Sedlacek and Brooks, 1976b).

Sedlacek and Brooks (1976b), in reviewing the non-cognitive predictor studies for minorities concluded that there were seven key non-cognitive variables: (1) Positive self-concept. Confidence, strong "self" feeling, strength of character, determination, independence. (2) Understands and deals with racism. Realist, based on personal experience of racism. Committed to fighting to improve existing system. Not submissive to existing wrongs, nor hateful of society, or a "cop-out." Able to handle racist system. Asserts that the school has a role in fighting racism. (3) Realistic self-appraisal. Recognizes and accepts any academic or background deficiencies and works hard at self-development. (4) Prefers long-range goals to short-term or immmediate needs. Understands and is willing to accept deferred gratification. (5) Availablility of a strong support person. Has a person of strong influence available to provide advice. (6) Successful leadership experience. Has shown the ability to organize and influence others within one's cultural/racial contexts. (7) Demonstrated community service. Has shown evidence of contribution to his or her community.

These non-cognitive variables have been recommended by the Association of American Medical Colleges in the admission of medical students (D'Costa, Bashook, Elliott, Jarecky, Leavell, Prieto & Sedlacek, 1974, 1976) and should be practical to employ at many other levels of education.

is not always exact in terms of how to weight the variables, particularly the non-cognitive predictors, there is much support for the aforementioned conclusion. Because of our inability to weight the predictors, it is all the more important that local research be conducted at each school. The studies noted above can serve as guidelines, but the specifics should be developed by the admitting institution. The appropriate use of non-cognitive information can also have an impact on student retention, which is of great concern to all.

There are a great many issues relating to minority admissions which will not be discussed here. Interested readers are referred to Sedlacek (1974, a,b) and Hixson and Epps (1975), for further information. There is one issue, however, which is especially important when attempting to summarize and evaluate the research in this area. We must remember that the very nature of our information gathering and research methods and our tendency to be conservative in interpreting results work against the minority applicant. Our application forms, interviews, letters of recommendation, tests, and the education system itself were designed for majority people. By having relatively few applicants providing scanty information from atypical backgrounds, it is easy to fall back upon the old standards in admission research, and explain results in terms of "flukes" or methodological problems. It is a time when we must drop a notch or two in our model of inductive science and be willing to piece together some more fragile and misunderstood bits of information. If we do not, we could be risking the future of entire races of people.

Whether we show an increase, a plateau, or a decrease in minority admissions will depend largely upon the actions of admissions officers and any conclusions we can reach from our research.

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Table 1.

Range and Frequency of Enrollments for 107 Schools by Geographical Location

Schools by Region	*N*	Range of Total Enroll.	Median Total Enroll.	Median Freshman Enroll.	Median Black Freshman Enroll.	Median Percent of Black Freshman Enrollment
North Central	36	2959-45,265	16003	3001	161	5
Southern	27	2500-33,721	14186	2700	126	6
Middle States	21	2075-43,007	10000	2231	200	9
Northwest	12	2258-26,000	7870	2367	34	2
New England	6	7400-19,585	9441	2222	30	2
Western	5	6400-21,421	17000	2830	96	5
Totals	107	2075-45,265	12999	2700	145	5

Table 2.

Median Percent of Black Freshman Enrollment by Region 1969-1975

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
North Central	3	3	3	5	5	4	5
Southern	2	3	3	4	5	5	6
Middle States	6	8	8	13	13	9	9
Northwest	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
New England	1	2	2.5	2	3	2	2
Western	5	8	6	4	9	4	5
Median Totals	3%	4%	4%	5%	6%	5%	5%

Table 3.

Frequencies of Admissions Criteria Used by 107 Schools

Schools by Region	N	Admissions Criteria: Open Admissions	High School GPA	High School Rank	SAT	ACT	CEEB Achiev. Tests	Extra-curr. Activities	Recommendations	Interview	Predicted GPA	Preference to Local Residents	Preference to Alumni/ Family
North Central	36	7	12	21	13	21	0	0	5	1	0	0	0
Southern	27	1	13	9	21	12	5	1	7	0	1	0	0
Middle States	21	1	12	14	14	2	0	3	4	1	1	0	0
Northwest	12	5	10	3	5	10	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
New England	6	0	3	4	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Western	5	0	5	0	4	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Totals	107	14	55	51	63	46	7	4	20	2	2	0	1

Table 4.

Frequencies of Admissions Criteria Used by 107 Schools to Select Black Students to Special Programs

Schools by Region	N	Spec. Programs N	Spec. Prog. Local Res. Only	Admissions Criteria: High School GPA	High School Rank	SAT	ACT	CEEB Achiev. Tests	State or Local Tests	Extra-Curr. Activities	Recommendations	Interview
North Central	36	23	3	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
Southern	27	7	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Middle States	21	18	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Northwest	12	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New England	6	5	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1
Western	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Totals	107	59	9	4	5	4	2	1	0	1	5	2

Table 5.

Median Percent of Non-Black Minority Freshman Enrollment
by Region, 1975

Region	Spanish Speaking Americans	American Indian	Asian American	Other Minority
North Central	1.2	0.5	0.9	1.0
Southern	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.5
Middle States	1.8	0.1	0.7	3.0
Northwest	1.8	1.1	1.7	2.0
New England	0.3	none	0.5	none
Western	5.0	0.2	6.0	none
Median Totals	1.3	0.3	0.8	1.3

Table 6.

Survey Data by Type of Institution

	N	Range of Total Enroll-ment	Median Total Enroll.	Median Freshman Enroll.	Median Black Freshman Enroll.	Median % of Black Freshman Enroll.	% with Special Programs Primarily For Blacks	% Using Different Criteria For Blacks
Public	87	2258-45,265	14,860	2900	150	4%	55%	7%
Private	20	2075-13,000	5,512	1352	75	7%	55%	20%
Totals	107	2075-45,265	12,999	2700	145	5%	55%	9%